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SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 02/24/10

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ARTICLES:

- (1) PM Hatoyama says negotiations with Okinawa, U.S. on Futenma relocation should start simultaneously

SANKEI ONLINE (Full)
11:20, February 24, 2010

Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama stated on the morning of Feb. 24 that with regard to the issue of the relocation of the U.S. forces' Futenma Air Station (in Ginowan City, Okinawa), "efforts to negotiate with and seek the understanding of Okinawa and the U.S.

need to start simultaneously," thus indicating that he intends to coordinate with the local authorities and the U.S. on Futenma's relocation site at about the same time.

As to when the negotiations will begin, he said: "Since we will make a decision by the end of May, needless to say, we will need to take action at the appropriate stage." The above was in response to questions from reporters in front of his official residential quarters.

(2) Okinawa assembly to adopt nonpartisan opinion paper against relocation of Futenma base within prefecture today

RYUKU SHIMBUN (Page 1) (Full)
February 24, 2010

The Okinawa prefectural assembly yesterday held a meeting of its Special Committee on Affairs of U.S. Military Bases, chaired by Kiyoko Tokashiki. In the meeting, the assembly unanimously decided to submit a draft opinion paper calling for the early closure and return to Japan of U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station, as well as for constructing an alternative facility outside the prefecture or outside the nation. The floor group of the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) was threatening to walk out of the session up until the day before the meeting, but the group expressed its support for the paper yesterday. It is now likely that the opinion paper will be adopted with the support of all assembly members at the plenary session. With support also from the groups of the Liberal Democratic Party and the New Komeito, which had approved of the existing plan to relocate the Futenma base to the Henoko district of Nago City, it

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will be an opinion paper supported by all political parties. The Okinawa assembly will express its opposition to the relocation of the base within the prefecture as a collective opinion for the first time since the Japan-U.S. Special Action Committee on Okinawa (SACO) issued in 1996 its final report that incorporated the existing plan.

Strong demand for relocation outside prefecture, nation

For Okinawa Governor Hirokazu Nakaima and the central government, which is looking for new relocation sites, the assembly's move will be a major change in the political environment surrounding the Futenma issue in the prefecture, following the anti-base candidate's victory in the Nago mayoral election in January. A harsh demand for the base to be moved out of the prefecture and the nation has been imposed on the prefectural government.

The opinion paper points out:

"The people in Ginowan and in Okinawa Prefecture are calling on the Japanese government to urge the U.S. to return the Futenma airfield, which is the world's most dangerous base, to Japan's control at an early date and to decide on how the vacated land should be used, along with other details. The Nago mayor has opposed the construction of a new U.S. base either at sea or on land in Henoko. The assembly strongly demands that the governments of Japan and the U.S. close down the Futenma base and return it to Japan at an early date and construct an alternative facility outside the prefecture or outside the nation."

The committee also confirmed that once the opinion paper is approved at the plenary session, the panel will make the request directly to the prime minister, the foreign minister, and the defense minister.

All floor groups of the ruling and opposition parties, excluding the JCP, initially intended to aim at unanimously adopting the opinion paper after the JCP walked out of the session as planned. The JCP, however, informed each group yesterday afternoon of its policy switch to support the opinion. JCP member Sogi Kayo said: "Although we cannot agree with the idea of relocating the facility outside the prefecture or outside the nation, the draft put together by the floor groups through hard work merits appreciation," indicating that the party gives priority to proceeding at a common pace in the assembly.

(3) "Reporter's Eye" column: Nago citizens have given their answer on Futenma relocation, now it's Prime Minister Hatoyama's turn

MAINICHI (Page 9) (Full)
February 24, 2010

Yoshichika Imoto, Western Japan News Center

The government and the ruling parties continue to drift on the relocation site of the U.S. forces' Futenma Air Station (in Ginowan City, Okinawa). The Henoko district of Nago City in northern Okinawa emerged as the relocation site more than 13 years ago. Nago citizens, who have long been at the mercy of the national government, have pronounced a clear verdict of "no" to Futenma relocation in the mayoral election on Jan. 24. The government and ruling parties are now saying that relocation to the inland area of Henoko might work if runways can't be built off-shore. Such talk

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angers many people.

Over the past 13 years one referendum and four mayoral elections were held. Futenma relocation was the issue in all the elections. The election campaigns were all hotly contested and except for the most recent one, candidates who accepted Futenma relocation were elected. However, it would be rash to think that there are many Nago citizens in favor of relocation. The national political situation then and now are completely different.

There is no doubt that what swayed the popular will in Okinawa toward opposing relocation was Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama's advocacy of Futenma's relocation out of Okinawa during the House of Representatives election last summer.

Okinawa Prefectural Assembly member Yoshikazu Tamaki, a supporter of Mayor Susumu Inamine, 64, who campaigned on a platform of opposing relocation, had foreseen victory during the election campaign, partly based on his own experience with losing the Nago mayoral election by a narrow margin in 1998. He said: "In the past, opponents to relocation doubted whether they could resist strong pressure from the national government. With the change of administration, there was no pressure from Tokyo. The conditions for expressing the popular will were in place." For me his remarks clarified the reason why relocation opponents failed to win in the past three mayoral elections.

Before the change of administration, popular will in Okinawa was suppressed by the carrot-and-stick method of using money (government spending for Okinawa's economic development) and force (Tokyo's pushing its agenda). Hatoyama's words liberated (the Nago people) from this yoke. My feeling is that after the mayoral election, Nago has reached a point of no return. One indication is the fact that the Liberal Democratic Party Okinawa chapter, which supported defeated candidate Yoshikazu Shimabukuro, 63, submitted a letter to the February session of the Prefectural Assembly demanding the relocation of the Futenma Air Station out of Okinawa.

I would also like to point out that in this 13-year period, mixed feelings have developed between Nago and the national government. I learned that when I interviewed former Mayor Yutoku Toguchi, 80, during the mayoral election. Toguchi is opposed to Futenma's relocation, but he said: "If the national government had dealt with this matter in good faith, the military base would have been built a long time ago."

Toguchi cited as one example the U.S. Forces Japan (USFJ) realignment subsidies. As of FY2009, the Tokyo government has spent some 23 billion yen on local governments accepting USFJ realignment projects in order to promote the realignment process. Whenever Tokyo reckoned the relocation process was not moving forward, it would stop paying out the subsidies.

Behind such an approach is the blatant attitude that you should obey orders because we are paying you a lot of money. Toguchi offered the analysis that "even people who accept (USFJ realignment) are not all

that happy deep down inside. The present situation is the result of the accumulation of such things." I cannot help feeling that even the present government and ruling parties are in another sense taking the popular will in Okinawa lightly.

The popular will aroused by the Prime Minister's words is beginning

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to move in a different direction. At the mass rally held in Ginowan City on Nov. 8 last year, a pupil at an elementary school in Nago asked the Prime Minister to keep his promise. At that time, Hatoyama still elicited a mixture of expectation and doubt. However, at the moment there has been a ground swell of doubt and anger.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano's remarks after the Nago election were a turning point. He said: "There is no reason why we should take (the results of the mayoral election) into consideration." The opponents of relocation were, of course, furious. Even Shimabukuro said Hirano was "toying with (the feelings of) the people of Okinawa and Nago."

When Hirano met Governor Hirokazu Nakaima on Feb. 20, he clarified his previous remarks, claiming: "That was a complete misunderstanding," but he also said to the governor, who called for relocation out of Okinawa: "We will strive for the best solution, but the result could turn out to be not the best solution." Many Okinawans probably take this as an indication that Futenma will be relocated within Okinawa.

Before the change of administration, Nago was pressured into accepting Futenma relocation with a carrot and stick. Now that the Nago citizens' have expressed their popular will, discussions seem to ignore the popular will. If the government eventually adopts the plan to relocate Futenma to the inland area of Henoko, there will be a backlash, inasmuch as the citizens were encouraged to have great expectations. This would be an even worse case of bad faith than the past administrations.

In the first place, it was the Tokyo government that decided to delay a decision on Futenma relocation until after the Nago election. Also, Hatoyama has said that he will make a decision on the relocation site "that will also be acceptable to the people of Okinawa." The Prime Minister has often been criticized for his loose tongue. Now that the Nago citizens have given their answer, it is his turn to take responsibility for his own words.

(4) DPJ-led administration was optimistic that it would be able to overturn existing Futenma relocation plan

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Abridged slightly)
February 24, 2010

The government was in chaos in late January over the issue of relocating the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station in Okinawa. Appearing on a TV program around that time, Senior Vice-Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications Shu Watanabe, who had played a central role in compiling the Democratic Party of Japan's "Okinawa Vision," argued that it was possible to review the relocation site. "If we leave the Futenma plan as is, noting that the country's security policy will not change despite the change of government, we will pass up a golden opportunity," Watanabe said.

Some DPJ lawmakers take the view that a country's security policy and its promises to other countries should change with a change of administration.

Mid-ranking DPJ lawmakers, including Watanabe, were looking for a way out of the Futenma issue from long before the time their party took power. Last February when the United States was trying to find out about the DPJ's thinking, Watanabe, Parliamentary Secretary of

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Defense Akihisa Nagashima, Senior Vice-Minister of Defense Kazuya Shimba, and others assembled in Tokyo. "What is the point of a

change of administration if we chose Henoko?" one attendee said.

The existing plan to relocate Futenma to the coastal area of Camp Schwab in the Henoko district in Nago was agreed upon in 2006 by the Koizumi administration and the Bush administration following an agreement reached in 1996 between the Hashimoto and Clinton administrations to return the base to Japan. To what extent was the lawmaker (who suggested jettisoning the Henoko plan) aware of the difficulties involved in overturning the existing relocation plan that so much time and energy had been expended on?

In the meeting, the alternative idea of integrating Futenma with Kadena Air Base came up. This idea had been looked into but was rejected by Washington and Tokyo earlier.

Some in the group ascribed the rejection of the Kadena integration idea to the discord between the U.S. Air Force that uses Kadena and the U.S. Marine Corps that uses Futenma. Their view led to the optimistic idea that the U.S. military would accept the Kadena plan if Tokyo told Washington that the waters in Henoko should not be reclaimed and allowed the U.S. Marines to use Shimojishima Airport in Miyako City for training. They also regarded the launch of the Obama administration as a fortunate tailwind, with one saying, "The President, who spent his childhood in Indonesia, takes an accommodating view toward Asia." Shortly before the House of Representatives election last July, Watanabe and others explained the Kadena integration idea to Secretary General Katsuya Okada (currently foreign minister), while avoiding making the idea public for fear of a local backlash. Okada showed interest in the idea, saying, "It is worth studying."

Although the DPJ was leaning heavily in the direction of a review of the existing plan, the party avoided mentioning Futenma in its manifesto (a set of campaign pledges). The reason was because Seiji Maehara (currently land and transport minister) and others who have gained the trust of the U.S. side insisted that the foreign minister and the defense minister need to keep their options open. Maehara and others' intentions to look for new relocation sites while leaving the door open for a settlement under the existing plan incurred misunderstandings at home and abroad that ended up augmenting the turmoil.

On Oct. 20 Okada held talks with U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates for the first time as foreign minister. In response to Gates, who emphasized that it had taken a long time to arrive at the existing plan, Okada rebutted, "We opposed the plan throughout that period as an opposition party." Gates also expressed his reluctance to accept the Kadena plan to Defense Minister Kitazawa and others. Despite that, Okada mentioned the Kadena integration idea at a press conference three days later, which drew strong objections from local governments and the Social Democratic Party. Persons close to Okada also regretted this action, describing it as jumping the gun. They believed that if the idea was announced at the right time, the U.S. side would make concessions and accept it. Okada later began expressing his willingness to accept the existing plan, but he began to lose his assertiveness.

On Feb. 2, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell asked DPJ Secretary General Ichiro Ozawa to visit the United States. Campbell's visit with Ozawa before prosecutors decided not to

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prosecute him in connection with a scandal involving his fund-management body, Rikuzan-kai, resulted in speculation that the United States has given up on the Hatoyama cabinet's ability to resolve problems. Okada, Maehara, and others are alarmed at the possibility of two-track diplomacy by the cabinet and the ruling parties. The cabinet is even more alarmed because that might become a reality with Ozawa's U.S. visit. Then again, this situation was caused by the inconsiderateness of the Hatoyama cabinet that believed it would be able to overcome the gravity of Tokyo's agreements with other countries once it took power.

Lawmakers and bureaucrats are in a state of confusion with the power shift partly because there have been only a few changes of government since the so-called 1955 system in Japanese politics

(symbolized by the LDP dominated system dating back to 1955 when the party was formed). "The first Japan-U.S. talks (under the Hatoyama administration) were as shocking as encountering a black ship," a lawmaker close to Okada noted. "We were not fully aware of the basic idea that diplomatic talks involve two parties."

(5) Record high noise level for this fiscal year of 106 dB confirmed at U.S. Kadena Air Base

RYUKYU SHIMPO (Page 33) (Full)
February 24, 2010

Kadena - During joint Japan-U.S. training exercises on Feb. 23 at the U.S. Kadena Air Base, also used by non-Okinawa-based aircraft, the noise level was 106.2 decibels (dB) (equivalent to the noise level measured along railroad tracks as a train passes by), which was the highest level in this fiscal year. The measurement of this noise level was taken in Hirara, Kadena Town, at around 9:34 a.m. The highest noise level recorded last year was 106.7 dB. The Kadena Town Office received numerous complaints about an increase in noise levels due to the joint training exercises, with one resident saying, "It's too noisy."

Non-Okinawa-based F-16 fighters and Kadena-based F-15 fighters began taking off and landing one after another at around 9:00 a.m. yesterday. Instances of noise levels over 100 dB occurred frequently from the morning that day in the town of Kadena. In Hirara between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., there were 115 instances of a noise level over 70 dB recorded, exceeding the daily average of 110 instances of noise recorded in fiscal 2008. On Feb. 22, there were 124 instances of noise levels over 70 dB.

Yesterday the Kadena Town office in charge of handling complaints and damage related to U.S. bases received complaints from residents such as: "We can't live under these conditions" and "We are suffering psychologically." One male resident of the town complained: "It is too noisy. My grandchild often cries. U.S. forces should consider the lives of residents in Kadena."

Kadena Town Base Affairs Section Chief Tokashiki pointed out: "As base noise has increased due to the joint training exercise program, we have received many complaints from residents. Residents in our town won't be able to experience any easing of the burden of U.S. military bases through the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan."

(6) Poll: Hatoyama cabinet, political parties

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)

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February 23, 2010

Questions & Answers

(Figures are percentages, rounded off. Bracketed figures denote proportions to all respondents. Figures in parentheses denote the results of the last survey, conducted Feb. 5-6.)

Q: Do you support the Hatoyama cabinet?

Yes 37 (41)

No 46 (45)

Q: Which political party do you support now?

Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto) 32 (34)

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) 18 (18)

New Komeito (NK) 4 (3)

Japanese Communist Party (JCP) 2 (2)

Social Democratic Party (SDP or Shaminto) 1 (1)

Your Party (YP or Minna no To) 2 (1)

People's New Party (PNP or Kokumin Shinto) 0 (0)

Reform Club (RC or Kaikaku Kurabu) 0 (0)

New Party Nippon (NPN or Shinto Nippon) 0 (0)

Other political parties 0 (0)

None 37 (37)

No answer (N/A) + don't know (D/K) 4 (4)

Q: There will be an election this summer for the House of Councillors. If you were to vote now, which political party or which political party's candidate would you like to vote for in your proportional representation bloc?

DPJ 32 (34)
LDP 23 (27)
NK 4 (3)
JCP 4 (3)
SDP 1 (1)
YP 3 (2)
PNP 0 (0)
RC 0 (0)
NPN 0 (0)
Other political parties 1 (1)
N/A+D/K 32 (29)

Q: Would you like the DPJ to occupy a single-party majority of the seats in the House of Councillors after the forthcoming election for the House of Councillors?

Yes 31
No 55

Q: On the problem of Prime Minister Hatoyama's political funds, Prime Minister Hatoyama has filed an amended return of donation taxes, explaining that he was completely unaware that he had received a huge amount of money from his mother. Do you approve of his handling of this problem so far?

Yes 16
No 75

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Q: On the problem of DPJ Secretary General Ozawa, prosecutors have now dropped his case and Mr. Ozawa says there is no need for a further explanation. Meanwhile, the opposition parties are calling for Mr. Ozawa to give a further explanation of the problem. Do you think Mr. Ozawa should explain this problem in the Diet?

Yes 81
No 15

Q: Do you think Mr. Ozawa should resign from his party post to take responsibility for the problem?

Yes 64 (68)
No 25 (23)

Q: Do you approve of Mr. Hatoyama's handling of the problem of Mr. Ozawa's political funds so far?

Yes 14
No 77

Q: When you vote in this summer's election for the House of Councillors, do you think you will attach importance to the problem concerning Mr. Ozawa's political funds?

Yes 41 (44)
No 48 (48)

Q: The opposition parties have presented a resolution recommending that House of Representatives member Ishikawa, who has been indicted over the problem of Mr. Ozawa's political funds and left the DPJ, resign from the Diet. The DPJ has refused to deliberate on this resolution. Do you approve of this?

Yes 17
No 69

Q: Prime Minister Hatoyama has appointed House of Representatives

member Edano to the post of state minister for administrative reform, which will be tasked with budget screening and other relevant issues. Do you approve of Mr. Hatoyama's appointment of Mr. Edano?

Yes 53
No 20

Q: Finance Minister Kan said he would like to start discussions in March on tax reforms, including the consumption tax. Do you approve of the government's starting discussions now on the consumption tax?

Yes 48
No 42

Q: The next question concerns the issue of relocating the U.S. military's Futenma airfield from its current location in Okinawa Prefecture. According to an intergovernmental agreement reached between Japan and the United States, Futenma airfield will be relocated to the city of Nago in Okinawa Prefecture. However, the Hatoyama cabinet is now looking for a candidate site from scratch. Do you approve of the Hatoyama cabinet's handling of this problem?

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Yes 38
No 46

Polling methodology: The survey was conducted Feb. 20-21 over the telephone on a computer-aided random digit dialing (RDD) basis. Respondents were chosen from among the nation's voting population on a three-stage random-sampling basis. Households with one or more eligible voters totaled 3,557. Valid answers were obtained from 2,161 persons (61 PERCENT).

ROOS